

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110**  
**COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023**  
**JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3787705872>**  
**CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-253-205-0468 MEETING ID: 378 770 5872**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilmember Dahl led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT:** Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Fire Chief Troy Maness (via Zoom), and Zoning Officer Jeremy Fadness

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Clint Smith, Ron Whitmoyer, Valerie St. Clair, McKenna Daniel, Beth Lewis, Shawn Lewis, Robie Culver, Valerie Blanchette, Ryan Blanchette, Paul Witham, Andrew Bassak, Justin Greve, and Rob Beach

**ABSENT/EXCUSED:** City Judge Dennis Loveless

**(0:00:40) PUBLIC HEARING 1:**

1. **Conditional Use Permit Request for 285 South Helena** – The staff report was included in the council packet. Zoning Officer Fadness reviewed the report and recommended approval of the proposed tri-plex. He answered questions from Council. This was an information-only item.
2. **Conditional Use Permit Request for 285 South Helena** – No written public comment had been received. Mayor Harris called for public comment on the request and received none.
3. **Conditional Use Permit Request for 285 South Helena** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the conditional use permit. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**(0:04:40) PUBLIC HEARING 2:**

1. **Zoning Variance Request for 214 Meadow View Loop** – The staff report was included in the council packet. Zoning Officer Fadness reported that one corner of the house had been built 16 inches to close to the property line. He reviewed the report, recommended approval of the proposed tri-plex, and answered questions from Council. This was an information-only item. This was an information-only item.

2. **Zoning Variance Request for 214 Meadow View Loop** – No written public comment had been received. Mayor Harris called for public comment on the request and received none.
3. **Zoning Variance Request for 214 Meadow View Loop** – Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There was no public comment on non-agenda items.

**(0:10:00) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the September 19, 2023 meeting were included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**(0:10:25) Administration** – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the budget document had been turned in to the state; the office had received several public information requests; she attended the wastewater system improvements meeting; and that new building permit applications continued to be received.

**(0:10:55) Police Department** – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 278 calls-for-service in September; he attended Coffee with the Chamber at Galaxy Roasting; Officer Kirkegaard was doing well at Montana Law Enforcement Academy; and that the department was still waiting to hear if they had been awarded the COPS grant.

**(0:14:30) Public Works** - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that he had met with Robert Peccia & Associates (RPA) regarding groundwater discharge; the new water tank at McClellan Creek will be drained, refilled, and put into service soon; a section of Wylie Drive will be closed temporarily to run city services under the road to the new Town Pump; RPA will help administer the TA grant; five wells in the rights-of-way will be abandoned this fall; and that an updated facility use agreement will be presented at the next council meeting.

**(0:13:55) Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that the search for new members continued.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:23:05) Valley Drive Funding/RAISE Grant** – A draft professional services agreement to apply for either the RAISE or a Rural Surface Transportation grant was included in the council packet. Robie Culver of Stahly Engineering explained how the grants are a \$1,000,000 funding opportunity for the city. Ron Whitmoyer commented in support of applying for the grant. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **(0:29:50) City of East Helena Street Paving/Overlay/Valley Drive Funding** – A map of proposed streets to repair was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore discussed the condition of those streets and proposed repair plans that would coordinate expenditures with the city’s matching share of the potential grants discussed in the previous agenda item. Mayor Harris noted that the grant award could reduce or eliminate the need to ask residents to vote on a bond to improve Valley Drive. This was an information-only item.
3. **(0:41:20) East Helena Valley Rodeo Association Lease Agreement** – City Attorney Elverum reported that the draft agreement was being reviewed. Ron Whitmoyer and Paul Witham commented in support of the agreement. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to table pending the draft agreement. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **(0:55:10) 4-H Club Meeting Facility Use Fee Waiver Request** – A copy of the facility use agreement was included in the council packet. Valerie St. Clair asked Council to consider letting the Farm Kids 4-H Club use one of the city facilities at no charge for their monthly meetings. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **(0:58:35) Halloween Movie in the Park and Kids’ Christmas Stroll** – Mayor Harris presented the request from Chris Pratt of J-4 Automotive to use Main Street Park for events for kids during the Halloween and Christmas Strolls. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **(1:00:30) East Valley Bus Service Memorandum of Understanding** – A copy of the agreement was included in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren reported that the terms were the same as the previous year’s agreement. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve signing the agreement. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
7. **(1:01:20) Fall Lunch with Local Government** – Councilmember Feist invited Council and staff to participate in the event sponsored by the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce. Councilmember Ferguson and Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren agreed to attend. This was an information-only item.

**(1:04:40) MAYOR’S REPORT:** Mayor Harris reported that he had attended meetings regarding the new rodeo ground location, the proposed fire department merger, and roads.

**COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** had nothing to report.

**Judy Leland** had nothing to report.

**(1:05:30) Wesley Feist** reported that the Montana Association of Chamber Executives was interested in doing some table-top exercises with East Helena; he had attended Homecoming;

attended Coffee with the Chamber; and that the Helena Area Housing Is Healthcare Summit had invited East Helena to present.

**Suzanne Ferguson** had nothing to report.

**(1:09:20) LEGAL REPORT:** City Attorney Elverum reported that he was prosecuting a case on the behalf of the City of Helena and that court had been going well.

**(1:11:45) PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 296778 through 296830 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 17, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, November 7, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor